



HIGHROADS OF SIKH HISTORY

BOOK II

TEJA SINGH

**Directorate of Planning and Development (Punjabi)
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA**

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FOREWORD

A few years back, the Punjabi University decided to reprint some of the old books of the great Punjabi writers. In pursuance of our policy we have already published some of these works. The writers include Professor Puran Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, Professor Teja Singh, Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid and Sardar Harinder Singh Roop.

The present series of the booklet entitled "Highroads of Sikh History", originally written by the late Professor Teja Singh, is in three parts. Part I contains 15 episodes from Sikh history; Part II gives character-sketches of some important personalities of Sikh history; and Part III presents a brief history of Sikhism.

These booklets are as much needed by our young men and women now as these were two generations ago. But, despite their usefulness and demand, they had been out of print. The University acquired copyrights and decided to publish them. The books are written in a simple language and can be easily understood by schoolboys. There is a great dearth of this type of literature in Punjab, and it is hoped that this series would be a welcome addition to the literature needed for moral and religious instruction of our young people.

Amarjit Singh
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BOOK II

BIBI NANAKI

Guru Nanak had a sister named Nanaki who was sweet and fair. She was five years older than Nanak and loved him dearly. He also did not like parting from her. He was more in her company than in his mother's. She had, therefore, much to do with the making of his mind and character. And she too had something of Nanak in her. Was she not called Nanaki ?

She knew his ways, and when his father did not understand him and tried to be hard on him, it was she who explained and defended him. One day Nanak had given away his warm blanket to a man shivering with cold. His father, Baba Kalu, was very angry at this, and would have beaten his son. But Nanaki came in to save her brother, and told her father that Nanak was going to be a great man. She knew his greatness before any body else. She was, in fact, his first Sikh or disciple.

One day a revenue officer of Sultanpur, named Jai Ram, came on business to Talwandi. He found Nanaki drawing water from a well, and saw that she was good looking and well brought up.

He was unmarried. As he had no parents, he was left to find a match for himself. He approached

the father of Bibi Nanaki through the local chief, named Rai Bular. Baba Kalu was pleased to have such a good gentleman as Jai Ram for a son-in-law. He gave his daughter to him in marriage, and she went to live with her husband at Sultanpur.

Sultanpur was at that time the capital of the Jullundur Doab. Its ruler was Daulat Khan Lodhi, a relative of Bahlol Lodhi, the Sultan of Delhi. Jai Ram served under him as a revenue officer. His duty was to measure lands and fix the revenue. Now-a-days the revenue is paid in money, but in those days it was generally paid in kind. The corn thus collected was sold by government agencies. One such agency was kept at Sultanpur under the direct control of the Nawab.

When Bibi Nanaki was settled at Sultanpur, she wanted also to bring her brother there. He was doing nothing at home, and this was daily growing painful to his parents. She knew she had some hold upon his heart, and that if he were brought to her, she could make him do something. So she sent her husband to Talwandi to bring Nanak to Sultanpur.

Nanak came and put up with his sister. After some time, he felt that he must do something for himself. He asked his brother-in-law to find some work for him. Jai Ram introduced him to the Nawab, who gave him charge of the grain shop. Nanak worked with a will, and in a short time became a good business man.

He was nineteen at this, and his sister thought that he should be provided with a bride. She arranged a match for him in a Hindu family at Batala in the district of Gurdaspur. Jai Ram could not attend

f, the marriage, but Bibi Nanaki went and managed
e all things herself.

v. When children were born to Nanak, it was she
e who took care of them. She had no issue of her own,
e and it gave her great pleasure to bring up her
brother's children. When he went away on long
journeys, she felt great pain at parting from him.

“How shall I pass my days without seeing you ?”
she said. Guru Nanak felt it equally difficult to part
from her. He said, “I must go where my Master
calls me. But I shall come to you whenever you
feel a strong desire to see me.”

It is written that whenever she remembered
him, Guru Nanak came from long distances to see
her. Nothing on earth was dearer to him than his
loving sister. She too thought of him not only as a
brother, but as a god on earth.

In 1518, when she was fifty-four, she felt that her
end was drawing near. She called him to her death-
bed, and asked him to stay with her until she died.

She was a good wife as well as a good sister.
Although she was wiser than her husband, she was
humble and loving. Her last words to her husband
were, “Forgive me, dear, if I have ever erred against
you.” He felt the loss so greatly that he followed
her in three days.

BHAI MARDANA

Mardana was a Mohammedan follower of Guru Nanak, and belonged to the same village. He was born in 1459. He worked as a drummer in the village. Sometimes he carried messages from place to place. He was married and had a son, named Shahzada.

When Guru Nanak left all work to preach his religion, Bhai Mardana attached himself to him. The Guru had a new kind of rebeck called *rabab* prepared for him. It produced very sweet music. The Guru was so charmed by it that he often forgot to eat or drink. He could do thus without the necessities of life for many days. But Mardana was not so made. He was soon tired of this kind of life and said to the Guru :—

“You may be able to live on air, Sir; but I cannot. Please make some better arrangement for me or I go.”

The Guru replied, “Bhai Mardana, this life of ours has beauties which are better than bread. Be patient and you will feel better.”

It was in this way that the Guru was able to reconcile Mardana.

Still the latter, now and then, found it difficult to follow the Guru. At such times, his love of music and the company of the great man bore him up.

He loved to be with him. They went together to far away places, to Assam on the one side and Mecca on the other. Some times they were received well; at other times they were made to suffer untold



Bhai Mardana

miseries. But they bore all things together.

Mardana was a simple man when he left his home. But after living long with the Guru and being knocked about in the world he grew very wise. When he returned home, his family could not recognise him. He had become a sage like his master.

Generally he was able to take care of himself, but sometimes he went astray. Once he met a woman of Assam who spread the magic of her charms about him. He followed her like a lamb, and was completely in her grip. But the Guru came to his help and freed him from her. He showed her that the chief charm of a woman was her virtue.

Mardana did not always remain with the Guru. Sometimes he came away to see his own and the Guru's people. It must have given a great pleasure to the Guru to be able to keep himself in touch with his people. The Guru's family also felt very grateful to Mardana for bringing news of their beloved.

Mardana was a Mohammedan by birth, but by long association with the Guru, he had acquired Sikh thoughts.

Usually he sang the Guru's songs, or simply played on the rebeck. But sometimes he sang songs of his own composition. One such song against the use of wine, is found in the Holy Granth.

In one of the journeys, they were returning from the West. When they reached Kurram on the Frontier, Mardana fell ill and died. This was in 1524. He was cremated on the bank of the neighbouring river. His descendants are still found in Ramdas, the city of Baba Budha. They are called *Rababies* or the *People of Rebeck*.

BABA SRI CHAND

Sri Chand was the eldest son of Guru Nanak. He was born at Sutlanpur in 1494. He had a younger brother, named Lakhmi Das. Sri Chand was only three years old, when his father left home and went away to preach in distant countries.

In his absence, Sri Chand was taken care of by his aunt, Bibi Nanaki. She loved him as her own son. She was very religious and in her hands Sri Chand also grew up to be a God-fearing man.

When Guru Nanak returned from his journeys, he took up his residence at Kartarpur. Sri Chand joined his parents there in 1522.

Guru Nanak worked as a farmer. He wanted his sons to assist him in the work. It pleased him to see their piety, but he did not want them to be idle. Lakhmi Das was proud of his father's position, and did not want to work. Sri Chand was more religious. He was always busy with the thoughts of God, and had no thought to spare for the world.

He was the elder of the two, and expected to be given the position of his father. But the father rejected his claim. He did not want his Sikhs to be guided by a man, who did not care for his worldly duties. He, therefore, chose Lahna to take his place as Guru.

Sri Chand was annoyed at this. He went away from home and became a monk. He wore a tall Persian hat on his head, and a string of lotus seeds around his neck. After some wandering, he went to

live at Barath in the district of Gurdaspur.

For many years he did not wish to meet the successors of his father. But when he grew old, he forgot his grievances against them. He began even to like them.

Once he came to visit Guru Ram Das at Goindwal. The Guru received him with great respect. Baba Sri Chand stroked his beard and asked, "Why do you keep such a long beard ?" The Guru replied, "It is meant to wipe the feet of such holy men as you." The Baba was pleased with this answer, and said, "Oh ! it was this humility of yours that got the Guruship for you."

After this Guru Arjun paid him a visit, and then Guru Har Gobind. When the latter met him at Barath, he had his eldest son Gurditta with him. Baba Sri Chand asked him, "How many sons have you ?" The Guru replied, "Five."

"Will you keep them all to yourself ? Won't you give me even one ?"

"Yes, I can give you my eldest, who is here."

Baba Sri Chand placed his hand on the head of Gurditta and blessed him. He said to the Guru, "The Guruship was already with you. I had only the fakir's hat and necklace, and those too I am now giving away to you." Saying this he gave these signs of a fakir to Baba Gurditta. All the differences between Sri Chand and his father's successors were thus removed.

Baba Sri Chand went away after this into the hills of Chamba. He was last seen in 1612 crossing the river Ravi. And then no more was heard of him.

BABA BUDHA

The life of Baba Budha shows how nobility, purity and godliness can raise a man high. Baba Budha was born humble, but by his character he became the most trusted and respected amongst the Sikhs. The great Gurus also sought his help whenever they needed it, and showed him high honour.

Baba Budha was born in 1506 in the village Kathu Nangal. His father was a farmer named Sugha and his mother's name was Gauran. He himself was called Bura. As soon as he grew into a boy, his father asked him to look after his herds of goats and other cattle.

One day, at the age of twelve, while he was tending his cattle and goats, he met Guru Nanak. The boy goat-herd first offered the Guru milk, and then asked him, "A few days ago the Mughal army passed this way, and laid waste all the fields of corn. The army was so strong that none dared face it. No doubt the Mughal soldiers were powerful, but I am told that death is more powerful than they. Death, it is said, respects none. It puts an end to the life of everyone, man, woman and child. Please tell me, O Guru, how I can overcome the fear of death!"

The Guru heard the goat-herd who though young in years, was old in wisdom. The Guru was so struck with his speech that he told him how to conquer the fear of death. He changed his name

also from Bura into Budha, because he talked wisely like an old man.

Since that time Baba Budha became a follower of Guru Nanak. After this he always took pleasure in being serviceable to the Guru.

When Guru Nanak was giving away his *gaddi* to Guru Angad, it was Baba Budha who performed the ceremony. After some time Guru Angad withdrew himself from his work, and lived unknown for some time in a village. At this his followers became anxious, and sent Baba Budha to prevail upon the Guru to come out of his place of retirement. Baba Budha succeeded, and the Guru again looked after his followers.

When Guru Angad handed over the *gaddi* to Guru Amar Das, Baba Budha performed the ceremony. Guru Amar Das, too, retired from the world for some time, and the Sikhs asked Baba Budha to find him.

At that time Baba Budha hit upon a happy plan. He let the horse of the Guru loose in the hope that it would find the place of retirement of its master. As expected the horse stopped near the door of the house, where the Guru was meditating. But none dared go in, because it was written on the door, "He who breaks open the door will come to grief."

Baba Budha then made a hole in the wall, and thus entered the house. There he found the Guru in deep meditation. After some time the Guru opened his eyes and Baba Budha told him, "O great Guru, the Sikhs are eager to see you. Please come out and tell them the path of virtue."

Baba Budha enjoyed a happy old age, and when

Guru Ram Das got the *gaddi*, it was he who performed the ceremony. Once on his *gaddi*, Guru Ram Das put Baba Budha in charge of the building of the tank at Amritsar. This duty Baba Budha did ably.

After the death of Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun Dev too was anointed by Baba Budha. At that time Baba Budha used to live near Amritsar, and used to supply the kitchen of the Guru with milk and curd. When Guru Arjun Dev's rival, Prithi Chand, began to mislead the Sikhs, Baba Budha brought him round.

Baba Budha was held in such high esteem that when Mata Ganga, wife of Guru Arjun Dev, wanted to be blessed with a son, she went to ask his blessing. She went to him, riding in a chariot and accompanied by her maids, but the Guru did not like this.

Next day he sent her again. This time she went on foot, clad in the garments of a suppliant. On her head she carried food for the Baba, and in her hand she carried a jug of *lassi*. When Baba Budha saw her goodness and humility, he blessed her. He told her that God would bless her with a son, who would be a saint as well as a fighter.

After some time Guru Arjun Dev was blessed with a son, who was named Har Gobind. When Har Gobind grew up, his father needed a tutor for him. After much thought, Baba Budha was requested to take charge of the boy. He, therefore, taught him how to use the sword, how to shoot an arrow, how to ride, how to read and write, and how to lead a noble life.

This was not all. When Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred book of the Sikhs, was compiled, Baba Budha was the first man appointed to read it.

After some time Baba Budha was asked to anoint Guru Har Gobind also. It is said when Guru Har Gobind was confined in the Gwalior fort, it was Baba Budha, who was sent to bring news about him.

Baba Budha, though old, was ever young. He had lived to the ripe old age of 117 years, and had been a trusted devotee of the Gurus. At last his years had their effect upon him. When the hour of his death drew near, he sent for the Guru, and died only after he had been blessed by him. He died in 1623. It was his four sons who founded Ram Das, thirty-two miles from Amritsar.

Baba Budha spent all his long life in the meditation of God and in the service of the Gurus. Men like him are rare to find.

BIBI BHANI

Guru Amar Das, the third Guru, had two daughters, Bibi Dani and Bibi Bhani. The latter was the gentler and the more loving of the two. From her childhood she was fond of praying and serving others.

She was wise beyond her years. Her young companions invited her on a pleasant day in summer to enjoy the pastime of the swing. She went, but in the midst of her enjoyment deep thoughts came again and again to her mind. And she sang :

“We are like the foolish lambs that skip and play,
While the Butcher Death is standing over us.”

When she grew up, her mother became anxious about her marriage. She asked a servant to go and find a suitable match for her. Just then a handsome youth carrying a basket of mud passed by. She pointed towards him and said, “Find some one just like that boy there.” The father, who was standing by, looked at the boy carefully, and said, “Why not marry her to him ? He is as good as anybody else.” The boy, whose name was Jetha, was a stranger from Lahore. He was sent for and the marriage was arranged soon after.

After their marriage, Bhai Jetha and Bibi Bhani came to live with the Guru at Goindwal. They went on serving the Sikhs as before with great love. The Guru was constructing a large well for the people's use. The daughter and the son-in-law of the Guru were both seen daily, carrying baskets of earth on

their heads. They did not mind what the people said.

Bibi Bhani considered Guru Amar Das not only as her father but also as her Guru. In the same way, she served Jetha not only as her husband but also as a saint. She used to fan them and draw water for them. She also worked in the free kitchen, kept by her father.

One morning her old father was bathing. She noticed that one leg of the wooden seat on which he sat was broken. She feared that he would fall and hurt himself. She put her hand under the broken leg so as to keep the seat level. The Guru, after bathing, saw what she had done. A nail had run through her hand, which was bleeding. He cried out, "Oh ! what have you done ?" She replied, "Nothing, father. I was only serving my Guru." The Guru was touched with her devotion, and blessed her.

Her goodness had become known far and wide. She daily worked in the kitchen, and hundreds were fed and clothed by her.

Once Akbar came to see the Guru. He was charmed to see the free kitchen, and wanted to make a grant for its upkeep. The Guru refused to accept it. Then the Emperor made the grant of twelve villages in Bibi Bhani's name.

Bibi Bhani was a great woman, and God had given her a greater husband. Bhai Jetha was a great lover of God. He was untiring in the service of the Guru and his Sikhs. Guru Amar Das tested him in every way and found him good. He appointed him Guru in 1574.

Bibi Bhani's son, Arjun Dev, was equally great.

She taught him her own virtues of love and sacrifice. In due time, he too became Guru, and like his mother astonished the world with his love and sacrifice.

As long as her mother was alive, she had been living in her parents' house at Goindwal. But when she died in 1570, Bibi Bhani felt somewhat lonely. She came away with her husband to live at a place about 30 miles from Lahore. Here they built a new city, called Ramdasapur. It came to be called Amritsar later on. When her father died in 1574, they settled down there.

But the love of her home where she had spent her best days was strong in her. When she saw her end coming, she went to Goindwal. There she died in 1598.

BHAI GURDAS

Bhai Gurdas was one of the most learned Sikhs. He was born in 1551 at Goindwal. He was a nephew of Guru Amar Das, and lived always in his company. He never married.

He became a great scholar of Sikhism. He also learnt Sanskrit and became a great Pundit. He wrote poems in Punjabi and Hindi. In them he sang of the great deeds of the Gurus, and explained their mission.

He was a leading Sikh of the time of the next three Gurus. He helped them in many ways. He was foremost among those who worked day and night to build the city and the temple of Amritsar. He went to Agra, Benaras and other places to preach Sikhism.

When Guru Arjun decided to prepare the Holy Granth, Bhai Gurdas helped him in collecting the material. The copy of the Holy Granth kept at Kartarpur is written in his hand.

His own hymns were not included in it, but they were declared to be the key to it. They are daily read and sung by the Sikhs.

He was a strong supporter of the Guru. Guru Arjun's brother, Prithia, tried very hard to hinder the spread of Sikhism. He misled the Sikhs and took away their offerings for himself. He did not leave anything in the free kitchen for the visitors. Bhai Gurdas came forward to undo the mischief. He stopped the Sikhs from giving anything to Prithia. He also made good arrangements for the regular supply of food in the kitchen.

He worked in the same way under Guru Har Gobind. He acted as head of the worshippers in the absence of the Guru.

When people found it difficult to understand certain actions of the Guru, Bhai Gurdas explained everything to them.

The Guru spread his gospel among the Mohammedans also. He hunted and played and kept armies. The people did not understand how a man of God could do these things and still remain religious.

Bhai Gurdas showed to the doubting public that Hindus and Muslims were the same in the eyes of God. To bring them to the right path was the duty of a religious man. He showed them that to kill wild and dangerous animals was an act of kindness. It was also not against religion to fight for right and justice against the enemies of men. Thus he satisfied all.

His life was pure and full of useful work. Next to the Gurus themselves, he did most to spread their religion. He did it both by teaching and example.

At the age of seventy-eight he died at Goindwal. In his last moments he expressed a wish to see the Guru. Guru Har Gobind went to see him, and said to his dying Sikh:—

“I thank thee, Bhai Gurdas, for having assisted me in laying out the road of the Sikh faith. Among the Sikhs thy name shall be immortal.”



Bhai Gurdas

BHAI BIDHI CHAND

Bidhi Chand was born in the village of Sursingh, in the district of Lahore. His father was a Zamindar, who tilled his own lands.

From his very childhood Bidhi Chand was very intelligent. He was a pet of his parents, and was allowed to have his own way in everything. Being a spoilt child he had formed many bad habits. He was very fond of stealing. His parents tried their best to improve his habits, but Bidhi Chand remained as bad as ever.

As time passed and he grew up, he became known as a great thief.

But there is magic in the company of the good. It is said about a kind of stone that it turns copper into gold. So the company of the good turns base men into noble beings.

Bidhi Chand, the well-known thief, came under the influence of a Sikh, and he told him about the evils of stealing. One day he took him to Amritsar, where he met Guru Arjun Dev.

The Guru looked at this strong and brave man and said, "You are not meant to be evil-minded. You should not lead an evil life, but be a good man. It is bad to steal; it is still worse to rob the poor. Be good, therefore, O Bidhi Chand."

When Bidhi Chand heard these words, he felt how evil it was to steal. So he said to the Guru, "I will do as you bid me to do."

From that day Bidhi Chand became a friend

of the poor and a devoted servant of the Guru. When Guru Har Gobind was made Guru, he kept an army. Knowing Bidhi Chand to be a very strong and brave man, he entrusted the command of the army to him.

Bindi Chand was such a trusted servant of the Guru that when the latter was confined in the Gwalior fort, he took him along with him. It was also Bidhi Chand who punished Chandu for troubling Guru Har Godind.

Another story about Bidhi Chand shows how daring he was.

Once Karori Mal, a merchant of Kabul, came to see Guru Har Gobind. He brought two of his best horses for the Guru as presents.

When Karori Mal reached Lahore, the Governor of that city heard of those horses. He liked them so much that he forced the merchant to give them to him. The merchant could not refuse the Governor, and gave the horses to him.

When he went into the presence of Guru Har Gobind he said, "I am really sorry that the horses I had brought for you have been taken away by force by the Governor of Lahore."

The Guru said, "Never mind, I shall recover the horses from him." He, therefore, asked Bidhi Chand to bring the horses without fail.

To achieve his end Bidhi Chand went to Lahore. Here he became a grass-cutter. Every day he would bring a bundle of grass from the fields, and sell it in the market.

The man in charge of the stable of the Governor of Lahore went to buy grass in the market

one day. Seeing that Bidhi Chand sold grass at a reasonable price, he asked him to take his bundles to the fort. Bidhi Chand did so, received the price of the grass and went away.

Next day again he sold his bundle of grass to the same officer. After a few days the officer asked him to supply him with grass every day. In this way Bidhi Chand came to have an access to the fort, a thing which he desired most of all.

In the fort he made himself a great favourite. Half of the price he got for his bundle of grass, he gave away to the servants who looked after the horses; the other half he distributed among the poor. The officer also began to like him so much that he gave him a job in the fort itself.

After a short time he was asked to look after the very horses which the Governor had taken by force from the merchant of Kabul. Once in the fort, Bidhi Chand was liked by everybody. The servants were happy with him, and the officers trusted him. The horses also took kindly to him.

On a festival when the servants were all asleep after eating and drinking heavily, Bidhi Chand managed to escape from the fort with one of the horses. Next day he went to the Guru, and made him a present of that very horse.

But the Guru was not satisfied with that. He said, "I want both the horses or none." So Bidhi Chand went back to Lahore again. Here he put on the clothes of a fortuneteller.

His fame as a fortune teller spread fast, and he was soon brought to the presence of the Governor. Questioned by the Governor about his horse, he told

him how the horse had been stolen. The Governor could not understand all that. At last Bidhi Chand said, "If you send me to the fort and show me another horse, I shall tell you how that horse was stolen."

The Governor allowed Bidhi Chand to enter the fort, and after this he bolted and locked all the doors. Then the other horse was brought before him, and he was asked to show how the first horse had been stolen.

At this Bidhi Chand mounted the horse and said, "It was I who took the first horse. I shall also take away the second horse, and this will show to you how the first horse was taken away." After this he set spur to the horse, and made it jump over the wall. Thus Bidhi Chand escaped with the second horse also.

Many other exploits of Bidhi Chand are also told. Bidhi Chand was a brave man, and was loved by the Guru very much.

When he died in 1638, a memorial was erected over his last remains at Sursingh.

SUTHRA SHAH

Who does not know the Suthras ? They can be seen sometimes begging alms in the bazars of big cities and the streets of villages. They hold two short wooden sticks in their hands, and a thick black cord hangs round their neck. Their head is covered with a small cap, and round their left shoulder is slung a small bag. They sing songs, and keep time by striking one wooden stick against the others.

They are known for their fearlessness. If you give them alms, they are very pleasant to you; but if you refuse to give them any thing, they begin to make fun of you. They are beggars of their own kind.

These Suthras are the followers of Suthra Shah. If you go to Lahore, you will find a temple near the old fort. This temple belongs to these Suthras.

Who was this Suthra Shah ? Suthra Shah was born in the Punjab. He lived in the time of Guru Har Gobind.

Many strange stories are told about his birth. It is said that when he was born, the mid-wife saw that he had teeth. This was thought to be an ill-omen. The baby was, therefore, deserted by the parents, and left unprotected in the streets.

One day Guru Har Gobind happened to pass that way. At that time he heard a baby cry, and said to his people, "Where can this baby be ? Please go and find it."

His men soon came back with a baby. No sooner did the Guru see the teeth in his mouth than

he realised that the baby had been cast off lest he should bring ill-luck to his parents.

The Guru was kindly disposed towards the baby, but his followers said, "Sir, he is unclean. Let us not have anything to do with him." The Guru said, "Do not call him unclean; he is as clean as any of us."

From that very day the baby came to be known as Suthra, which means "the Clean One".

The Guru himself looked after the upbringing of this child.

Suthra Shah grew up into an unselfish and God-fearing man. He was a man of noble character; he found great joy in serving the Guru. He was, however, very witty, and he loved to play little jokes upon others.

One day a great Sadhu came to pay his respects to Guru Har Gobind. Suthra Shah sat behind the Guru, while the Sadhu talked to him. During their talk the Sadhu lost his temper, and began to use bad language. Guru Har Gobind was surprised and asked him the reason.

At this the Sadhu replied, "Sir, the man who is sitting behind you is mocking at me. Sometimes he points one finger at me, and sometimes another. It is not possible for me to talk with you."

The Guru looked behind and found Suthra Shah seated near him. He asked him why he was behaving so badly. Suthra replied "Sir, the Sadhu thinks too much of himself. He thinks himself to be a godly person, but you know he has not as yet learnt to control his temper. By pointing my finger at him, I wished to show to you that he could be

upset by little things." In this way Suthra proved how empty were all the boasts of that Sadhu.

One day the Granthi of a Gurdwara complained to the Guru that Suthra Shah never attended the Gurdwara. The Guru asked Suthra to explain it. Suthra replied, "Sir, I see you every day, and I think that is enough. I do not go to the Gurdwara, because I do not wish to see the priests. They want money, but I have none to give. It is really my money that they want, and not me."

Thus many stories are told about Suthra Shah, which show how fond he was of little jokes.

He was also a poet. In his verses he never tried to observe the rules of verse-making. He never tried to choose fine words. His aim was to express his thought as best as he could. His verses are, however, full of wit and wisdom. His great delight was to show that things are not what they seem. People try to appear what they are not.

Suthra Shah was a fearless critic of all things. He said what he felt to be true. He never cared if his words offended anybody. To a king as to a poor man he spoke the truth. It is said there are many people who say what is pleasant, but there are very few who can say what is unpleasant. Suthra was not afraid of telling the unpleasant truth. Therein lay his greatness.

BHAI NANDLAL

At the court of Ghazni in the seventeenth century there was a Hindu officer named Diwan Chhajju Ram. He was a trusted servant of his master for he was honest, capable and loyal. He was well-versed in the affairs of the state, and was always given high offices.

Though well-to-do, he was not happy. It was because all his children had died in their infancy. At the age of fifty-one, however, fortune smiled on him. He was blessed with a son in 1633. He named him Nand Lal. Since he was afraid lest the boy should die early, there were no rejoicings at his birth.

At the age of six, Nand Lal was placed under the charge of an able teacher of Arabic and Persian. The boy was very intelligent, and made much progress in a short time in Arabic and Persian. He showed also his liking for writing verses at an early age. Such fine verses did he write that even the most famous poets began to admire him.

Nand Lal was only a boy when the death of his mother darkened his life. A few years after this his father also passed away. What was he to do then, this young man of nineteen ?

One day he made up his mind to present himself before the Nawab. On meeting him he requested the Nawab to give him the post left vacant by his father. The Nawab smiled at this and said, "You are yet inexperienced; you are too young to occupy that position. First of all, you should aim at

something modest, and in course of time you should work your way up to that place."

This reply of the Nawab disappointed Nand Lal very much. He, therefore, turned his back upon the court, and never sought any favour from the Nawab afterwards.

Nand Lal was as fond of travel as of books. When the Nawab could do nothing for him, it was useless for him to stay at Ghazni. He, therefore, sold all his property there and accompanied a caravan to India. After some time he reached Multan.

At Multan he settled and built a house of his own. He had not been there for long when his good nature and his learning brought him many friends. In about two years he became one of the most honoured citizens of the place. During this time he was married to the daughter of a respectable Khatri.

His wife gave him not only happiness, but brought him also other good things in life. One of them was that she told him all about the Sikh religion. He was so taken by it that he learnt Gurmukhi and read the Guru Granth Sahib.

Nand Lal never wasted his time. He was able therefore, to write several books. In some of them he sang the praises of God; in others he described the beauties of the Sikh religion. One or two books, which he wrote late in life, deal with the praise of Guru Gobind Singh.

Such was the fame of Nand Lal's learning that the Nawab of Multan appointed him his Chief Secretary. The Nawab was much pleased with his work, but the other courtiers became jealous of him. He, therefore, left that job, and set out on his

travels again. He visited Lahore and Amritsar, and, last of all, Agra.

At Agra he wrote verses in praise of Prince Bahadur Shah. These verses pleased the Prince so much that he appointed Nand Lal his Chief Secretary. In a short time Nand Lal became famous at the court as a scholar of Arabic and Persian, and as a great writer of court documents.

But soon he found the court too hot for him. He, therefore, thought it best to leave Agra. At that time he was accompanied by his servant, whom he had brought with him from Ghazni. This servant was very loyal to him, and was loved by Nand Lal as his brother.

When Nand Lal reached Lahore, the servant died. This was a very severe blow to him. At that time he thought about life and what it meant; and after thinking over his future for a long time, he made up his mind to go to Anandpur.

There he met Guru Gobind Singh, whom he told all his story. Guru Gobind Singh came to like him for his learning, his love of truth and his devotion. He, therefore, made him one of his court bards. This made Nand Lal very happy.

He was, indeed, so happy that he forgot all about his home and children. He devoted himself, heart and soul, to the service of the Guru. The one joy of his life was to write verses in praise of the Guru, who was highly pleased with him. Thus he died in 1705 in the service of the Guru.

Bhai Nand Lal was a learned man. He was a poet, who devoted his life to the search of truth. The Sikhs are very fond of his verses and take much pleasure in reading them.

BABA DEEP SINGH

Baba Deep Singh was born in 1682 at a village called Pahuwind in the district of Lahore. His father's name was Bhai Bhagta, and his mother was named Jiwani.

We do not know how he passed his early life.

We first hear of him when he was a noble youth of twenty. At that time he accompanied his father and other members of his family to Anandpur, the home of Guru Gobind Singh. His father went to that holy city to devote himself to the service of the Guru. He did so much for the Guru there that the latter baptized the whole family into the ranks of the Khalsa. Bhai Bhagat Singh and Jiwan Kaur returned home, but Deep Singh remained with the Guru. He followed his master everywhere.

When Guru Gobind Singh left the Punjab and went to Nander in the Deccan, he appointed Deep Singh to take charge of Damdama Sahib, which was a great seat of Sikh learning. Baba Deep Singh prepared four standard copies of the Sikh Scriptures.

He, however, hated a life of inaction, and therefore became one of the followers of Baba Banda. Under his command he performed many daring deeds, for all of which he came to be known as a man who never lost his heart when facing odds.

For a long time we do not hear anything about Baba Deep Singh. In the year 1761, however, his name was again on the lips of everyone. How did that happen ?

In 1761 Ahmed Shah Abdali inflicted a crushing defeat on the Marhattas. He captured not only a large booty, but also took many men, women, and children as prisoners. After defeating the Marhattas, the soldiers of Ahmed Shah overran the Punjab, but there they met their match in the Sikhs.

The Sikh soldiers fell upon them, took away not only their possessions, but rescued the prisoners also. All this filled Ahmed Shah with anger ; but, being in haste to return to his own country, he did not stop to teach the Sikhs a lesson. On his reaching Kabul, he despatched eight thousand soldiers, with Nur-ud-Din at their head, for the purpose of crushing the power of the Sikhs. Nur-ud-Din failed to do so, and another general with a large army was sent.

This general was a cruel foe of the Sikhs, and as soon as he reached the Punjab, he did not give them a moment's rest. He killed some of the Sikhs and drove the others away from their homes. Some of them had to take shelter even in forests. At last he reached Amritsar. There he filled the holy tank with earth, and did many other things to violate the sanctity of the temple.

Baba Deep Singh was in Malwa when he heard about the high-handed action of Ahmed Shah's general. He, therefore, gathered a band of Sikh warriors, and fixed Tarn Taran, in the district of Amritsar, as the meeting-place. The Afghan general also heard of this and left Amritsar at the head of a large army. At a distance of four miles from the holy city he made ready to face the Sikhs.

The Sikhs were at that time led by Baba

Deep Singh. Though an old man of seventy, he still possessed the fire of youth. All his teeth had fallen and his hair had turned grey, but still his arms were powerful and his hand was steady. Since his childhood he had done nothing which could enfeeble him, and in his old age he was as powerful as a young man. Nor was he alone. He was accompanied by other Sikh warriors also.

At Golarwal the Sikhs stood face to face with the enemy. The latter worked havoc among the Sikhs, because they were very few in number. At this Baba Deep Singh drew his sword and ordered an attack. Then the Sikh swords flashed, blade struck against blade, and the ground was covered with blood. This dispirited the Mohammedans, and the Sikhs advanced.

At last Aman Khan stepped forward and shouted "I hear Baba Deep Singh is the bravest of all the Sikh soldiers. If he is really so, let him come forward and fight me in single combat."

As soon as Baba Deep Singh heard this he said, "I am ready."

Then both of them began to fight. Sometimes the one had the upper hand, and sometimes the other. They dodged each other's blows time and again. Soon the horses of both fell dead under them. Even then they did not cease fighting. At last the head of the Mohammedan general was cut off, but soon after this Baba Dip Singh also received a mortal wound.

The war, however, did not come to an end. It raged on. Many brave warriors, Sikh as well as Mohammedan, lost their lives. At last the Sikhs

won the day.

The victory was, however, due to the bravery of Baba Deep Singh. A temple was raised, therefore, on the spot where his head had been cut off. A Gurdwara was also built at the place where his dead body was cremated.

MAHARAJA ALA SINGH

Patiala is one of the Phulkian States. Its Maharaja comes from the family of Phul, who was told by Guru Har Gobind that his descendants would become kings.

Phul had obtained some power from his forefathers. He got more by fighting his neighbours. When he died, his son Ram Chand succeeded him.

Ram Chand was a trusted Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh. He received baptism from the Guru and was called Ram Singh. He and his brother Tilok Singh helped the Guru. Once he wrote to them a letter, in which he said, "Your house is my house." This letter is still kept with great care by the Maharaja of Patiala.

Ram Singh had six sons. One of them was Ala Singh.

Ala Singh was born in 1691. He was twenty-three years old when his father died. He rebuilt Barnala and made it his capital.

Seeing his fame on the increase, the neighbouring Mohammedan Rajputs fell upon him in 1731. They were assisted by the Governor of Jullundur and the Nawab of Malerkotla. In this difficulty, the Sikhs of Majha led by Deep Singh came to the help of Ala Singh. After a hard fight the Sikhs won the day, and the Governor of Sarhind was slain.

This victory spread the fame of Ala Singh abroad and the number of his followers increased.

He conquered many more villages and built new ones.

In 1745 he met with a mishap. The new Governor of Sarhind, Ali Mohamed Khan, summoned him to pay his tribute. He went, but was thrown into prison. After two years he escaped, and was again at the head of his state.

The invasions of Nadir Shah and the Abdalis had weakened the power of the Delhi Emperor. He had not much hold on Sarhind and the surrounding districts. This gave a chance to Ala Singh to increase his power. He defeated the Bhattis, who were in the habit of taking away cattle. In 1752 he took the district of Sanawar, which contained eighty-four villages. One of these was Patiala. Here he built a mud fort called Garhi Sodhian.

In Majha the Lahore Government was giving great trouble to the Sikhs. Many of them left for Malwa, where they had a freer hand. They took terrible revenge on Sarhind. They made common cause with Baba Ala Singh, and he was able to defeat the Mohammedan Rajputs and his old enemies, the Bhattis. He took Samana and Sunam. This increased his power much.

In 1761 Ahmad Shah Abdali fought a big battle with the Marhattas at Panipat. Baba Ala Singh helped the latter. He had also given trouble to the Governor of Sarhind. This made the Abdali angry. He attacked Barnala in 1762 and took Ala Singh prisoner.

But when Ala Singh came before him he was pleased with his manly appearance. He set him free on receipt of four lakhs of rupees from his wife.

The Shah embraced him and bestowed on him a robes of honour. He ordered the Governor of Sarhind to treat Ala Singh as an independent prince.

Next year he gave him the charge of Sarhind, with the title of *Raja*. Ala Singh died in 1765.

Maharaja Ala Singh lived a simple life. He wore a coarse blanket like many other great Sikhs of that day. He maintained a free kitchen to feed people of all classes and creeds. In this kitchen he and wife served like ordinary servants.

He had only one wife, whom he loved most dearly. He led a pure and good life, and people honour his name to this day.

BABA PHULA SINGH

Two things have always distinguished the Sikhs from others. One is their courage, the other is their love of service. Of the Sikh heroes about whom we have read, none was more distinguished in these two qualities than Phula Singh Akali.

Akali Phula Singh was born in a small village in the district of Hissar. His father, Ishar Singh, died when Phula Singh was yet an infant. On his death-bed Ishar Singh called his friend, Akali Narain Singh to his side, and said to him in a broken voice : "Phula Singh is my dearest child ; look after him when I am gone."

Narain Singh respected the last wishes of his dear friend. He took much interest in Phula Singh, who was known for his fearlessness and self-confidence even when he was a boy.

At the age of ten, Phula Singh's education was taken in hand by Akali Narain Singh. First of all, he taught him Gurmukhi, and made him learn many parts of the Granth Sahib by heart. He also taught him Sikh History and the principles of Sikh religion, as well as the art of warfare.

When Phula Singh was about fourteen years old, his mother died. When she was dying, she sent for Phula Singh and said to him, "Dear son, you are already fatherless, but your mother also will be no more in a short time. You should follow the path of virtue, and always be fearless in the service of your



Baba Phula Singh

country.”

These words of his dying mother had a great effect upon Phula Singh. He gave away his lands and property to his brother, and himself became a follower of Akali Narain Singh. He became known not only for his love of serving others, but also for his daring on the battlefield. For this reason he was appointed leader of his group on the death of Akali Narain Singh.

After this Phula Singh settled in Amritsar, and devoted his whole time to the service of the holy Temple. The priests had become greedy and corrupt, and he tried to reform them.

In 1802 Akali Phula Singh came to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja attacked the Bhangi Misal in order to annex Amritsar to his territory. When the two armies were standing opposite each other, Akali Phula Singh came between them. He asked the two armies not to strike a blow. They obeyed, and peace was made between them.

After this Akali Phula Singh was of service to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in many ways. When Kasur was attacked, it was Phula Singh and his men who won the day. When Mohammed Khan, Nawab of Bhakkar, rebelled in 1816, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent Akali Phula Singh and Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia to put him down. Needless to say Akali Phula Singh won fort after fort from the Nawab.

It was also Akali Phula Singh who, with five hundred of his picked men, conquered Multan. Though wounded in the battle, he still fought on. When the fight was over, the Maharaja took Akali Phula Singh in a procession through the streets of Lahore.

Akali Phula Singh showed his valour also when Maharaja Ranjit Singh attacked Peshawar. In fact, Maharaja Ranjit Singh obtained possession of Peshawar mainly through the bravery of Phula Singh and his men.

When Kashmir was invaded Akali Phula Singh was sent with Prince Kharak Singh to fight the battle. They both succeeded in making the chieftains of Rajauri and other places own the Maharaja as their lord.

After conquering Peshawar, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had appointed Dost Mohammed as its Governor. In 1823, however, the ruler of Peshawar rebelled. He was joined by other Mohammedan chiefs, and they all took possession of the forts on the other side of the Indus. The Sikhs marched to this place under Prince Sher Singh and crossed the Indus by building a bridge of boats. The Mohammedans, however, destroyed this bridge.

But soon the Sikhs on the other side of the Indus came to the help of their friends. This puzzled Maharaja Ranjit Singh very much. He did not know what to do, but Phula Singh was always bold and resourceful. He said to the Maharaja, "Let us cross the river on horse-back." At this he rode into the river. The Maharaja also followed with his soldiers. Though many were drowned in the river, yet some of them reached the other bank safely. This revived the courage of the Sikh soldiers.

In the morning, therefore, they planned an attack, but when they heard that the Mohammedans had arrived with forty guns and ten thousand soldiers, they changed their mind. Akali Phula Singh,

however, did not like this. He stood before the holy Book of the Sikhs and prayed for victory. Then he ordered his soldiers to attack.

When the soldiers were fighting bravely, a bullet hit Akali Phula Singh. He, however, did not lose heart, but said to his soldiers, "Onward Sikh warriors onward !" So the Sikhs fought on and on.

At this time three shots were fired at the elephant on which Akali Phula Singh was riding. The poor mahout was killed, but no harm was done to Akali Phula Singh. After a short time he asked his soldiers to dismount from their horses, and charge the enemy on foot. The Akalis fought so well that the Mohammedans were routed. Akali Phula Singh, however, was killed in action.

The news of his death filled everyone with grief, but the saddest of them all was Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is said he burst into tears when he saw the dead body of his brave warrior.

Akali Phula Singh was not only a great warrior, he was also bold in speech. If he found Maharaja Ranjit Singh going wrong, he would tell him so to his face. Everyone was afraid of this great man.

Akali Phula Singh was not a physical giant, but he possessed a well-knit frame. It is said he possessed an iron constitution. He was a bold warrior, a daring rider and a great swordsman. His trust in God was unbounded. Though faced by odds he never lost heart.

He was unselfish. To sing hymns and to recite the sacred songs was the joy of his life. He never married and devoted his whole life to the service of

the country.

He always liked to live in a Gurdwara. Asked by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to stay at his court, he refused to do so. His was a life of great self-sacrifice. The Sikhs remember him with pride and gratitude to this day.

SARDAR HARI SINGH NALWA

Sardar Hari Singh's name is a house-hold word in the Punjab. In the North-West Frontier Province he is known still better. He never lost his heart in whatever situation he was placed. His enemies tried in all possible ways to put an end to his life, but Sardar Hari Singh proved cleverer and more powerful than they.

There is a story, which shows this better than anything else.

A Mohammedan gentleman, named Baz Gul Khan, invited Sardar Hari Singh to a feast. He requested him not to bring more than four or five men with him, because it was not possible for him to provide all his men with meals. Sardar Hari Singh gladly accepted his invitation and promised to bring only four men with him.

But the Malik was false. He did not mean what he had said. He gathered in his house a large number of Pathans, whom he had asked to fall on Sardar Hari Singh when he was taking his meal. Thus he wanted to do away with a dangerous enemy.

For some time after Sardar Hari Singh arrived the Malik was friendly with him. Then he changed his tone. "Be ready, O Sardar, for your death," he thundered. As soon as Sardar Hari Singh heard this, he drew his sword and stood up to face his enemies. In a commanding voice he said, "Let him who dares fight with me, come forward."

There was something in the voice and tone of Sardar Hari Singh that chilled the hearts of his enemies. None dared to come forward, and Sardar Hari Singh went home without striking a blow.

So much for his personal daring. He was also great as a general. That is why Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to say, "What a pillar is to a building, what right hand is to one's body, Sardar Hari Singh is to me and my kingdom." Sardar Hari Singh was, in fact, always handy, when a fort had to be conquered, a rebel chief to be taught a lesson, or a mutiny to be put down.

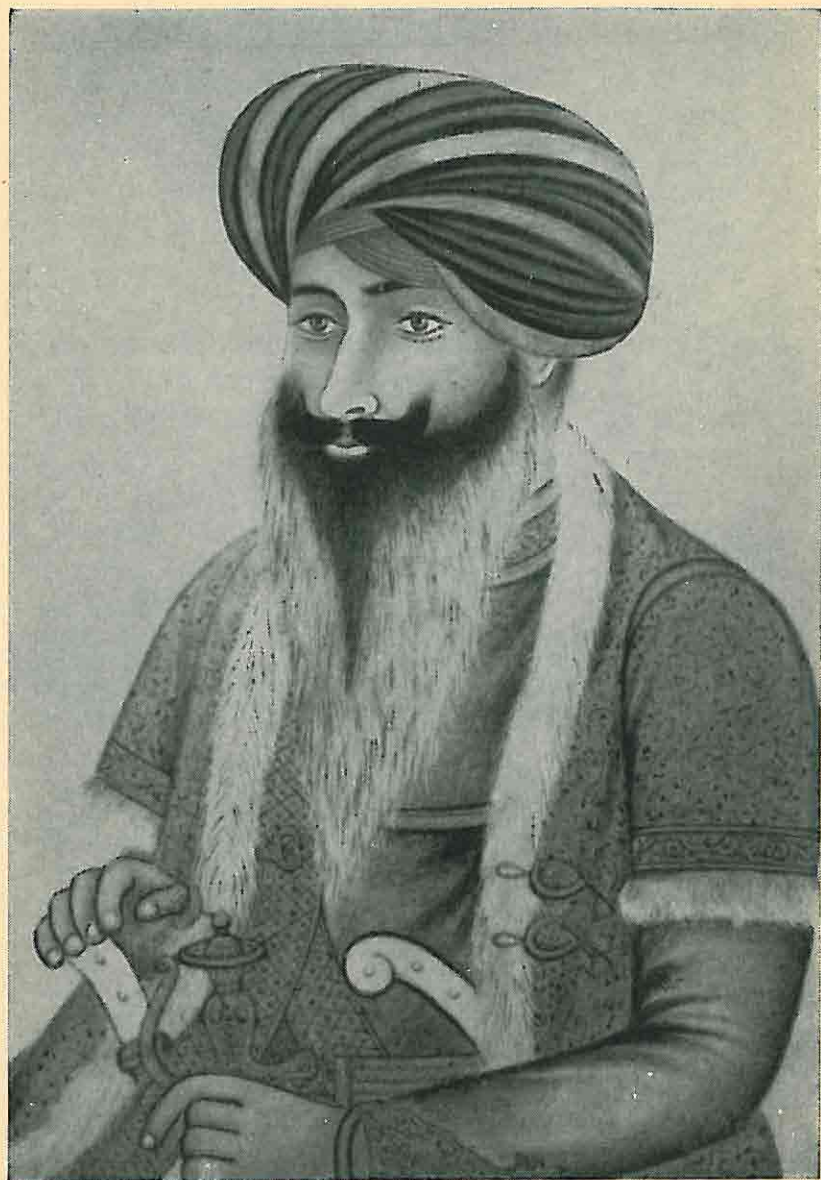
When Maharaja Ranjit Singh attacked Kasur, Sardar Hari Singh proved his worth.

Sardar Jiwan Singh, the ruler of Sialkot, rebelled against the authority of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the Maharaja himself went forth to teach him a lesson.

The Maharaja laid siege to the fort for eight days. But still he was unsuccessful. He consulted his ministers, but they did not give any helpful advice. Then Sardar Hari Singh came forward and said, "If the siege is conducted as I desire, victory is certain." Thereupon the Maharaja left the whole thing to him. Sardar Hari Singh went to work with such a will that in a short time he was able to conquer the fort. On hearing the news that the fort had fallen, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was so delighted that he richly rewarded the Sardar.

Hari Singh showed his usefulness in many ways. Whenever a Nawab refused to pay his revenue, he was sent to get it. If there was misrule in a province, Sardar Hari Singh went to set things right.

Once he was despatched to put down the Nawab



Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa

of Mankira. The army of his enemies numbered twenty-five thousand, but he had only two thousand men with him. The result was that his soldiers were soon repulsed. Seeing them broken-hearted, Sardar Hari Singh himself rushed into the battle. This worked wonders. The Sikh soldiers fought very bravely, and in the end won.

In this way Hari Singh fought at Hazara and other places in the Frontier Province.

The battle that he fought at Jamrud is still remembered. It is said that during that battle he disguised himself as a Pathan, and went into the camp of the enemy. First of all, he entered the tent of his great enemy Sher Khan, whom he put to death after a little fight.

When Dost Mohammed Khan heard about the death of Sher Khan, he sent word to the tribes that they should come in large numbers to put down the Sikhs. At this a good many came forward.

In the meantime, Sardar Hari Singh fell ill; but though ill he went on horse-back amongst his soldiers. The horse he was riding was shot dead by the enemy, but he mounted another.

But soon a bullet hit him. Being too ill to move about he was taken to the fort. Before going he said to his general, "Fight on till the soldiers arrive from Lahore. If I die, keep my death a secret."

After saying these words he died; but the Sikhs fought on, thinking that their brave leader was still with them. In the end they won, but the joy of the victory was lost in their sorrow at the death of their brave general.

Sardar Hari Singh was not only a great general,

he was also an administrator and an ambassador. It was he who was sent with Fakir Aziz Din to confer with the English. He was also a great builder who built the fort of Jamrud.

Above all, he was honest. Once Raja Dhian Singh complained to Maharaja Ranjit Singh that Hari Singh drew the pay of two thousand soldiers from the government, but had only four hundred soldiers in his pay. He owed, therefore, two lacs of rupees to the government. At this the Maharaja inspected his troops. Most of the soldiers being on leave, he was able to find only four hundred. This seemed to prove the guilt of Sardar Hari Singh in the eyes of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He, therefore, asked him to pay two lacs of rupees to the government.

This broke the heart of Sardar Hari Singh, and he retired from service. He discarded his general's uniform, and put on plain clothes. He thus lived an obscure life, and devoted himself to meditation.

After a while the Maharaja found out the truth. Then he himself went, mounting an elephant, to the house of Sardar Hari Singh, and admitted his mistake. Reconciliation followed, and Sardar Hari Singh returned to his duty as a general again.

The Sardar was born in 1791 at Gujranwala. His father, Sardar Gurdial Singh, was employed at the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He died, however, when Hari Singh was twelve years old. Even at that age, he asked Maharaja Ranjit Singh to take him into his service. The Maharaja agreed, and this was the beginning of his greatness. What he did in his after-life has already been told.

RANI SADA KAUR

In Sikh history the name of Rani Sada Kaur shines as a star. She was a woman whose wisdom was equal to her courage. She was fearless in war and cool in the time of danger. She was also respected by everybody for her noble character. Though she became a widow at an early age she never even thought of marrying again. Everyone praised her for her faithfulness to the memory of her husband.

Rani Sada Kaur was a daughter of Sardar Dasondha Singh. She was about eleven years old when she was married to Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh, the eldest son of Sardar Jai Singh Kanhaiya. It is said that the husband and wife were of the same age.

Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh was a capable man. He was a great general as well as a wise governor. His father had, therefore, entrusted the care of his estate to him. He had done his work ably and had increased the size of the estate.

All this had filled the rival princes with jealousy. They, therefore, combined against Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh. A battle was fought at a place near Batala. There the army of Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh was defeated, and he was killed in action.

His death was a severe blow to the aged Jai Singh. Weakened by old age, he could not bear this grief, and he died soon afterwards, leaving behind three sons. These sons, however, could not govern the Misal. Rani Sada Kaur, therefore, began to rule in their place.

So well did she govern her people that she added new lands to her Misal. Everybody feared her, and everyone admired her for her wisdom and bravery. She was so bold that she herself used to go to the battlefield. It is said that she put on the dress of a soldier and carried a sword in her hand. Many times she went all alone into the enemies' camps and brought news of their movements. Thus she saved her Misal from ruin by her tact and fearlessness.

As she had saved her own Misal from ruin, so she was to save Maharaja Ranjit Singh also from his enemies.

The Maharaja was married to her only daughter. As soon as Sardar Mahan Singh, father of Ranjit Singh, died, the son occupied the throne at the age of twelve. He was, however, surrounded by many enemies, who wished to take his life. Rani Sada Kaur proved his guardian angel and protected him from all harm.

Thus she became his active helper. When he took possession of Lahore, she rendered him much help. When the enemies of Ranjit Singh tried to take back Lahore, she herself took part in the battle, and prevented the city from falling into the hands of Ranjit Singh's enemies.

She helped the Maharaja in the government of his kingdom also. It is said that when mutiny broke out in Hazara, she accompanied Prince Sher Singh to that place, and after disguising herself as a Pathan, she went into the camp of the enemy. From there she brought much valuable news. Since she had no son, Ranjit Singh was the heir to the kingdom after her death.

Rani Sada Kaur was as well known for her character as for her fearlessness and ability to govern.

PRINCE NAU NIHAL SINGH

Nau Nihal Singh was the grandson of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was born in 1820. His father Kharak Singh was not good-looking and had no strength of character. But Nau Nihal Singh was much like his grandfather. He was handsome, brave and wise.

From his childhood he was brought up with great care. He was taught riding, shooting, and other kinds of military exercises. He was very popular with the people, especially with the army. He was sent even as a boy to take part in various wars.

Nau Nihal Singh was hardly fourteen years old when he was given the command of the army sent to take Peshawar. He did his work so well that his grandfather appointed him the first governor of the province. He also added considerably to his jagir.

At seventeen he was married to the daughter of Sardar Sham Singh of Attari. The old Maharaja spared no pains to make the occasion a grand one. A sum of rupees twenty lakh was distributed among the poor alone.

In 1839 the Sikh and British Governments decided to move armies to Kabul to place Shah Shuja on the throne. Prince Nau Nihal Singh was sent in command of the Sikh force. He was still at Peshawar when he received the news of his grandfather's death.

Kharak Singh was proclaimed Maharaja. He was weak and unable to do anything for himself. He had a Vizir who was very clever. The latter's name

was Dhian Singh, a Dogra of Jammu. He was all-powerful in the kingdom.

But after some time he found power slipping from his hands. Another man, named Chet Singh, had won the favour of the Maharaja. He began to plot for the destruction of his rival.

He sent for Nau Nihal Singh from Peshawar, and made him believe that Kharak Singh and Chet Singh were thinking of handing over the Punjab to the British. His mother, Rani Chand Kaur, was equally deceived. She and Prince Nau Nihal Singh turned against the Maharaja and his adviser.

Dhian Singh with a few followers went to the Lahore Fort and sought out Chet Singh. He killed him with his own hands in the presence of the Maharaja. After this, Kharak Singh retired to a house in the city and had nothing more to do with the Government.

Prince Nau Nihal Singh took up the work of government. Dhian Singh was the Vizir. But the Prince did not want to be guided by him. He appointed a council to advise him, and tried in many ways to free himself from Dhian Singh.

He also sent a strong force to the northeast of Jammu. Its purpose was to reduce Mandi and other eastern States. But it was also meant to overawe the Jammu party.

The Jammu Vizir was not idle on his side. He saw that he had removed Kharak Singh from the throne for nothing. He must do something more to regain his old power. He must get rid of Nau Nihal Singh at all costs.

When Maharaja Kharak Singh died in 1840,



Prince Nau Nihal Singh

Dhian Singh saw that his position had become still worse. Now Nau Nihal Singh would be king, and he would surely try to bring about his ruin. So Dhian Singh wanted to be quick.

When Nau Nihal Singh was returning from the funeral of his father, a trap was laid for him. The porch of the fort, under which he was passing, suddenly fell down on him. He died on the same day when he was to be crowned. Thus died one of the most promising Sikh rulers.